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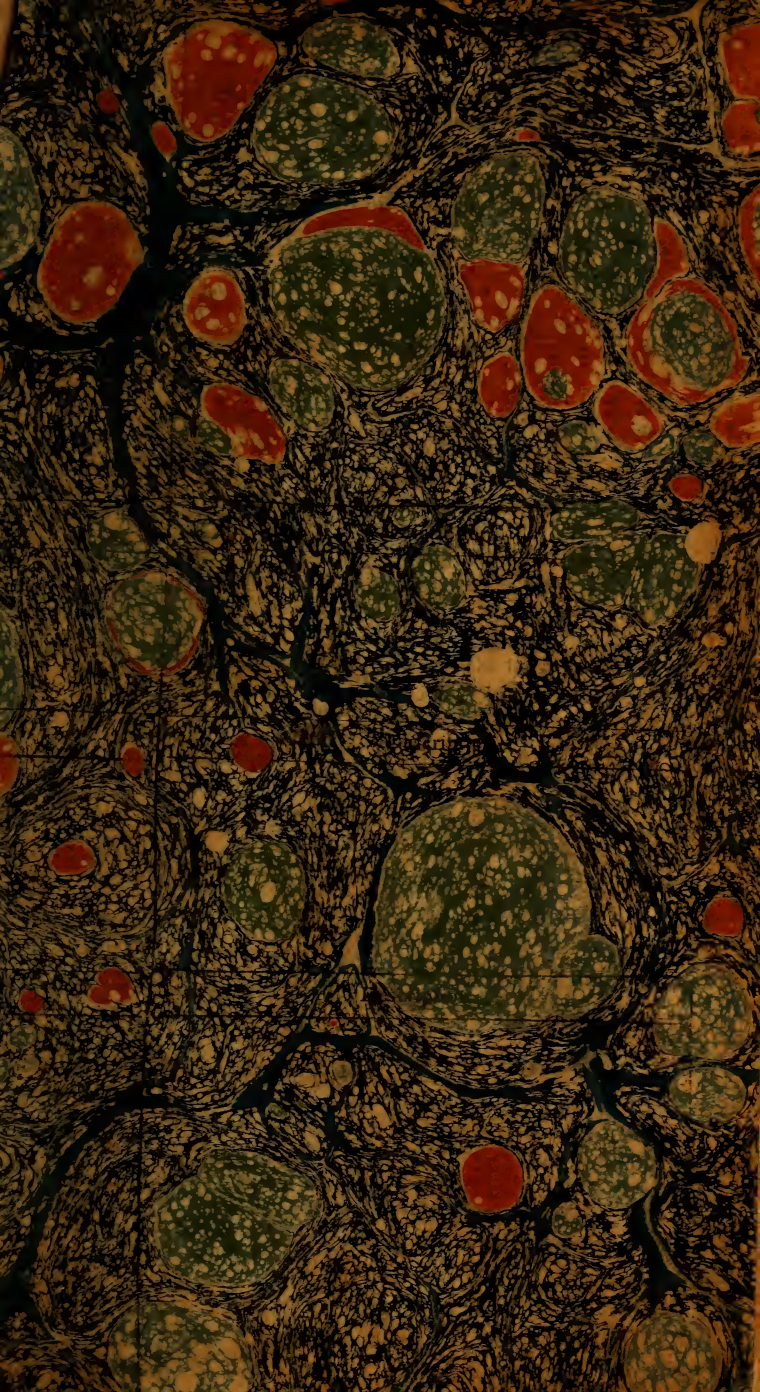
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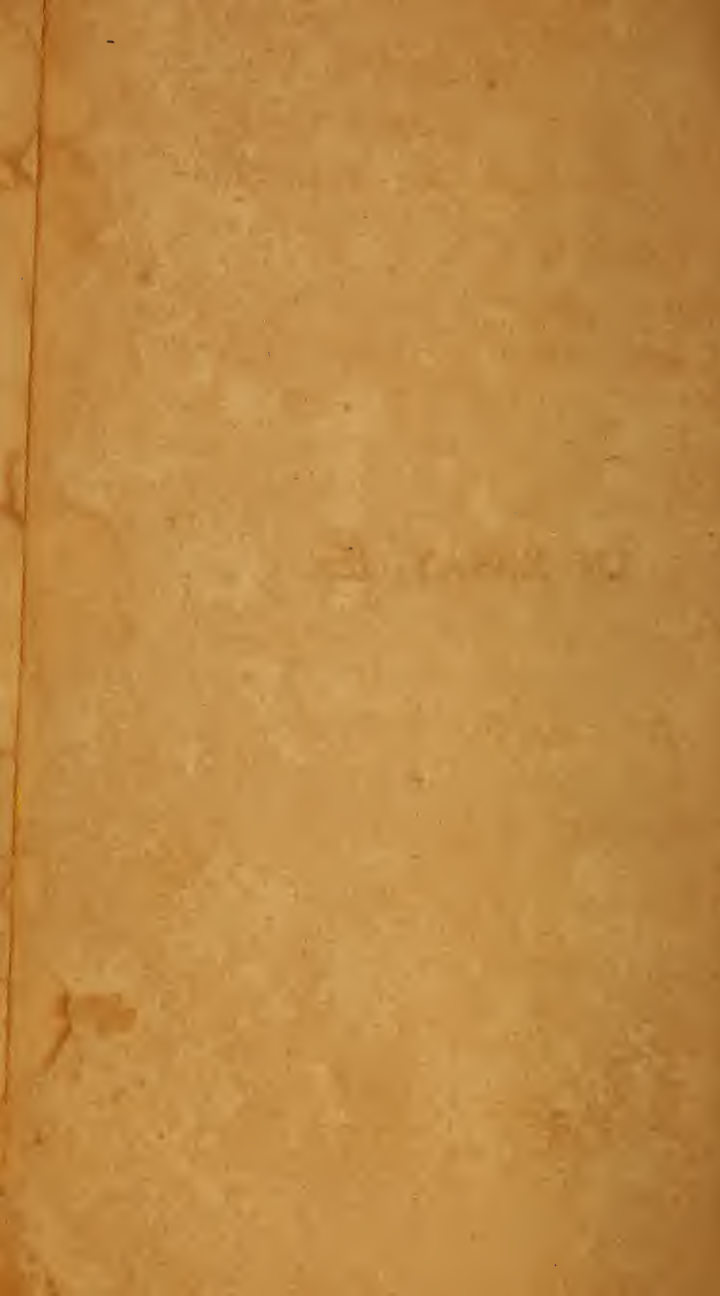












AN ESSAY, &c.

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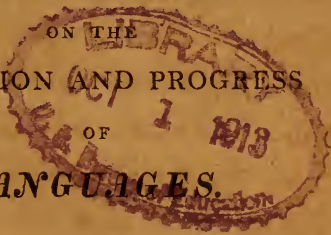
AN ESSAY  
ON THE  
*Best Method of Teaching*  
FOREIGN LANGUAGES,

AS APPLIED  
WITH EXTRAORDINARY SUCCESS TO THE FRENCH  
LANGUAGE;

WITH  
A Table, displaying the Philosophy of the Relative Per-  
sonal Pronouns, and rendering their use and syntax  
perfectly easy at first sight.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A DISCOURSE,  
ON THE  
FORMATION AND PROGRESS  
OF  
LANGUAGES.



BY PETER S. CHAZOTTE,  
PROFESSOR OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE AT PHILADELPHIA.

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PHILADELPHIA:  
PUBLISHED BY EDWARD EARLE, NO. 2, LIBRARY STREET, NEAR  
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W. Fry, Printer.  
1817.

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District of Pennsylvania, to wit:

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\* SEAL \*  
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BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the eighteenth day of November, in the forty-second year of the independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1817, Peter S. Chazotte, of the said district, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the words following, to wit:

“ An Essay on the best Method of Teaching Foreign Languages, as applied with extraordinary success to the French Language; with a Table, displaying the Philosophy of the Relative Personal Pronouns, and rendering their use and syntax perfectly easy at first sight. To which is prefixed a Discourse, on the Formation and Progress of Languages. By Peter S. Chazotte, Professor of the French Language at Philadelphia.”

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, “ An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned.” And also to the act, entitled, “ An act supplementary to an act, entitled, “ An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned,” and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints.”

D. CALDWELL,

*Clerk of the District of Pennsylvania.*

## PREFACE.

A FEW days ago a gentleman of this city, whose cultivated mind, refined manners, and urbanity are as fascinating as his conversation is agreeable and instructive, addressed me in these words: "How does it happen, sir, that every French teacher who offers himself to the notice of the public, declares he is possessed of a very superior method of teaching the French language, when it is known that many of them have never taught it before? if so, what improvements can they have made in the difficult art of teaching? I think, sir, that these gentlemen do not deal fairly with us. Certainly we would think it preposterous and contemptible in the extreme in him who, without having ever practised physic, would impertinently have the presumption of directing our most celebrated and skilful physicians how to operate on the human body? or in him who, view-



ing, as every creature does, the magnificence of the heavens, would presume, without previous studies and a capacious mind, to give to our Newton and your Cassini, the epithet of ignorant deceivers; and tell the world that he has a more perfect knowledge than they of both the theory and attributes of the heavenly bodies. Do not believe from what I have just been telling you, that I think it impossible to bring nearer to perfection the art or manner of teaching, and particularly foreign languages. No; you have, on the contrary, convinced me, by a happy experiment, of the great improvements you have made towards it. I know how slow and gradual the progress of human knowledge is; and I think that we are to expect important improvements only from those who to information, research, reflection, and diligence, unite a long experience in the practice of their profession. I shall close these remarks by inviting you to publish your new method of teaching the French language; and through you, I make the same invitation to such of the other

teachers as may have made other real improvements. By this means, a valuable selection might be made, which would simplify and render the manner of teaching it less variable, and infinitely more congenial with nature and philosophy.”

Conscious of the correctness of your remarks, I replied, it is about a year ago, that I took a pen to draw a sketch of my new method, with a view to make it public. I was proceeding towards it, when various considerations dried, if I may be allowed to use the expression, the ink in the nib of my pen. To do justice to my system, I said to myself, I will be obliged to expose the folly, the ignorance, the imposition and the extravagance of others. Truth is not always welcome, and I may be thought either vain or envious. Has not imposture found its abettors? Has not declamation been mistaken for sound judgment, and the most absurd and extravagant system met with admirers and supporters? Yes, deceit

has been rewarded and stands equal to an honourable fulfilment of sacred promises. Who ever exposed the man, who promised and gave his word of honour, that with the help of his grammar and dictionary, he would teach the French language in three lessons, provided he was paid fifty-five dollars in advance? Not one. On the contrary, many went to him, paid him fifty-five dollars, received his promises and three lessons, and being dismissed without having acquired any thing, they were satisfied with greeting him with the epithet of *rogue*; and walked home loaded with useless books. But soon after, the same man took a new ground. An undefined system was offered under pompous names; thousands could be taught at the same time, and they all were to acquire the language within three short months, by merely mimicking phrases all at the same time after the manner of parrots. Well, Sir, the people believed it, they flocked to the place of rendezvous, formed large classes, which considerably increased the number of victims.



Nevertheless, they all remained silent, and why? Because upon reflection, they saw the impossibility of it. They were ashamed of their folly, and would have preferred seeing every citizen deceived in the same manner, rather than own their want of judgment and their too great credulity.

Sir, we are strange beings indeed. No rational system will satisfy our wishes for wonders, and Nature's path is too old a track for us to follow. Simple and regular beauties have lost their attractive power; nothing but novelty can awake our curiosity. Let Nature, in her way of sporting with the weak understanding of man, cause the birth of a monster, we all run, we all pay a tribute to it. Let ignorance, folly or interest, create monsters in the arts or sciences, and we see that without reflection or examination, many declare themselves the champions of these new born systems. The greater their deformities, the warmer they grow in their support, and even resort to abuse,

because some people will not betray their judgment and take it for granted, that these monsters have the exact proportions of Nature's most perfect work.

For a new instance of this love of novelty, peruse an Essay lately published in New York, by a Mr. Hamilton, a new comer to the United States, and now in this city. You will find in it, a new-born system for teaching the French language, brought forth by one, who is not a Frenchman; who had never before attempted to teach it; and who was ignorant enough to suppose, that a language can be acquired grammatically, without having a knowledge of the verbs. I confess it is a rare phenomenon. It embarrasses me to say what it is, except I call it, *a body without substance, which casts a shadow produced by no light.* But, Sir, what is not less extraordinary, this essay is accompanied by the signatures of some Latin and Greek scholars, whose certificate proves, that unable

to get the substance, they have grasped at the shadow, with which they are well pleased.

The inventor of this (I do not know how to name it, but suppose it be a system,) expecting to give a lustre to his name, declares he received his education with the Jesuits, and resided in France the greater part of his life. Although I wish not to question the correctness of his statement, I may at least be allowed, according to the rule he has laid down with respect to others, to doubt of his capacity to teach either the French or English languages. In the specimens he has given of both, in his Essay, I find the English full of errors, false constructions, and incoherences; the French, a compound of a specific gibberish, unconnected sentences, and ill assorted expressions; the whole of it, a budget of asperities, virulence, and aspersions, against the fair reputation of every teacher, grammarian, and lexicographer. He alone is honest, and to prove this, he discards all grammars and dictionaries; he uses

the Bible at first, and then Voltaire or Gil Blas, (three well assorted books, indeed!) His scholars have nothing to commit to memory, no rule to learn, nothing in fact to do; he takes upon himself the whole trouble of learning for them; they have only to listen to him for about *fifty hours* at different times, and mimic whatever he is pleased to tell them; and behold, instantly, they all speak French as fluently and correctly as their vernacular tongue, and understand grammar without having ever seen or been taught any!!!—Why, Sir, he is a prophet endowed with the divine power of distributing tongues to his disciples. In fine, to use his favourite metaphor; he is a new born Moses, who offers to take the lead of a new race of Israelites, in order to conduct them, through a shorter way than the Red Sea, into the promised land; but, he does not say, that he also means to take charge of the plate and jewels of the modern Egyptians, and then leave his followers to wander forty years in the desert in search of



the promised land: this, I suppose, is understood.

Now, Sir, allow me to ask you, how a modest man, who lays no claim to fame, can expect the public will discard these long cherished monsters, which I have been pourtraying, in order to receive and welcome a system, grounded on the simple principles of nature, and which will offer no deformity?

“The public,” he replied, “may be led into error, and be deceived in those things, of which they are not perfectly qualified to be a judge. Besides, the Americans are too honest to refuse a due credit to him, who gives his honour as a pledge of what he promises to perform. But he, who abuses our credulity, ought to be branded with infamy. Do us the justice to believe, that nothing will mislead us in our judgment, if we are furnished with proper antidotes, and be enabled to compare systems with systems. It is for this obvious reason, that I have

desired you to publish your new method; and be assured, Sir, that the public will soon discriminate between him who is the sycophant, and he who is the teacher.”

In compliance with this gentleman's much respected request, I have now the honour of laying before the public, an Essay, on the best method of teaching foreign languages, and particularly the French: preceded by an introductory discourse, taking a cursory and rapid view of the formation and progress of languages.

AN  
INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE,  
ON THE  
FORMATION AND PROGRESS  
OF  
*LANGUAGES.*

I VIEW Languages, as having the same Divine origin. God in creating man, endowed him, not only with the faculty of thinking, but also with the capacity of uttering such sounds, as would serve to represent his thoughts and pourtray his numerous affections. It is probable, that a modulation of the voice, or perhaps, a simple articulation, was then expressive of a whole body of thoughts. In proportion as the senses were more or less affected by inward impulses, or external objects, the countenance

performed either a smaller or a greater share of the operations of the mind. Just moulded by the hands of his Maker, man was astonished at his existence; every new object that struck his sight, caused surprise, threw him into raptures, and produced ecstasy. In that happy state, he had but to enjoy, to love, and admire; hence, his mind was rather contemplative; his tongue needed not perform numerous functions, and although he was all thought, these thoughts remained unexpressed by sounds. As long as he lived happy, his vocabulary of sounds was small; but, when he incurred the wrath of his Maker, when deprived of the estate of bliss he had enjoyed, he had to toil, hunger and thirst; when he saw the guilty hands of a son, crimsoned with the innocent blood of a brother; when pains, rendered acute by remorse, made his tongue break forth in loud complaints, he then rent the air. The echoes were, for the first time, saluted with the accents of despair, and heard names given to things that had no name before.



From this very early period of the world, may be traced the gradual progress of the vocabulary of sounds, which constituted the primitive language of men. As long as they lived together and formed but one small society, this vocabulary, trifling indeed, if compared with ours, yet sufficiently copious for the intercourse of men in the primitive stage of nature, served to express their few wants, their affections, their desires, and to interchange ideas with each other.

Men unacquainted with the cultivation of the earth, to make it bring forth its annual treasures, found it impossible to form a large society. The same spot, could not long afford a sufficiency of fruits for a multiplying race, nor pasture enough to feed the flocks that provided them with milk. The earth laid wide open to their view, they must part, and go in search of other spots. No geographer had informed them of the diversity of climates; the world, with them, was the visual horizon, and

the centre of it was the cedar, the palm, or the fig tree, that had been a witness of their birth. Imperious necessity, that which overleaps every obstacle, and silences the dearest affections of the heart, self-preservation, commanded them not to delay the moment of their parting. With reluctance, the sons and the fathers, the sisters and the mothers, bid each other adieu; and each head of a family, taking with him his wife, his children, and his share of the common flock, they pursue in silence different directions, and move off with a slow and tardy step, as if loath to quit the scenery that had enlivened their infantine sports. It may perhaps be said in this place, that on the division of the common flock, the idea of property attached to *mine* and *thine*, was for the first time conceived.

Now reader, let us follow them while they proceed on their way, and mark this new era in the progress of language. Each head of a family carries with him that first vocabulary of sounds he has been taught to lisp by the side

of his mother. See, how they are variously affected by the unexpected sight of things unknown to them before, and by obstacles and multiplied accidents, of which they had no idea: Unknowingly, they expose themselves to imminent dangers; they proceed through trackless forests, and their way is obstructed by morasses and creeks. Obligated to trace back a part of their way, they are assailed by wild and ferocious beasts, monstrous crocodiles and serpents; they must fight their way through; a part of their flock has perished with fatigue; another has been devoured by carnivorous beasts, that have also threatened the travelling colony with destruction; in fine, thousands of accidents, some disastrous, others happy, have succeeded each other, and taught them lessons of experience. But a wide river stops unexpectedly the progress of their course; the opposite shore displays to their view, natural and verdant meadows, which roll themselves far beyond the reach of the sight—how exuberant a spot for them to feed and raise their flocks!

The colony must go over to the opposite shore, and they set their mind to work, in order to find a way to effect it;—they succeed, and rivers cease to be an obstacle to their progress. How great the enlargement of the mind which their various situations have produced since their first parting! how numerous the ideas, generated by all they have seen, encountered and experienced! They have viewed, compared and analysed every new object; this operation of the mind expands the human understanding; they utter new sounds to express and communicate their new-born ideas, and each travelling colony by numerous additions, has tripled the size of the first vocabulary.

Had they been travelling together, they might have interchanged their ideas and agreed on the sounds that were to express them; but the colonies were separated and far distant from each other; they had no means of communication, and could not impart their discoveries; therefore, every colony swelled its private vo-



cabulary with sounds dissimilar with those of the other, and all the additions made since their first parting, were represented by different articulations and modulations of the voice. This is the great era of the formation and multiplication of languages, which branched out, and increased, in proportion as men parted from each other or formed themselves into separate tribes and societies.

Years and centuries rolled away ere the whole world was taken possession of by man. In the mean time, the frozen zone courted his presence and retained him there by forming barriers of snow to prevent his egress; the temperate zone attracted him by its mild climate, its wild figs, and grapes, or perhaps by its roots and its acorns; and the torrid allured him, with its ever green foliage, its luxuriance and ever-growing fruits. While they were thus branching in every direction, the crossing of large rivers had given him the first idea of ship building; he had felled a tree, and made a

canoe. He is now seen gliding gently down to the mouths of rivers, which he has already made tributary; but while employed in making the sea yield him also its treasures, a sudden blast drives him from the shore. The whistlings of the winds announce the war of the elements. The sun, hidden by a triple range of thick clouds, which its rays cannot penetrate, leaves hardly a sufficient light to discover the horizon inflamed and darkened by turns; lightnings rend and furrow the dark veil; peals of thunder shake the earth, roar, swell, bounce as it were upon a chain of mountains, and sink lowering into the immensity of space; the fury of the winds raises the anger of the deeps; they swell into mountains, sink into abysses, and rise again into higher mountains still: the clouds, broken in the mighty conflict, open gaping mouths, from which torrents are falling. The heaven, the earth, and the sea, are all confounded, and struck with mutual terror. Man, in a frail bark, tossed and carried from the top of a briny mountain into a thousand

gaping abysses,—anticipates the hour of his destruction; frightened, terrified, depressed, he is helpless; the horror he feels enchains all his faculties: he neither thinks, sees, or hears. Amidst this most terrific conflict, unguided by either the rays of the sun, or far remote shining moon and stars, in the gloom of darkness, he is vomited by the sea upon an unknown coast.—But God has effected his great purposes! He now bids the elements be silent. The winds precipitately retire into their icy caves; the thunders stifle their terrifying voice; the billows sink, the sea is calm. The eastern horizon is now seen glowing with the brilliant and fresh colours of the Aurora, and the gates of the morning are thrown open, to let the sun re-appear more majestic than ever. It brings tidings of peace, and with a voice that gladdened all nature, and struck man with reverence and awe, the Almighty attended by hosts of celestial legions, made known these words: “Man, behold, I have given thee these islands; “go thou and increase, and train up thy chil-

“dren to love me and to be just!” The echoes repeated these cheering sounds; the mountains manifested their joy, and the air resounded with the notes of the winged inhabitants: they all united to salute the approach of man. Thus, by the unerring will of God, to which philosophers have given the name of accident, chance, and fatality, man saw himself in possession of the whole earth.

We have seen the human race, spreading over the face of the earth, dividing, and subdividing itself into innumerable tribes and people; some making progress towards civilization and languages, others growing stupid and degenerate; several after having acquired a distinguished name, fell again into the ignorance of the first age; while others, rose from a state of barbarism to the rank of nations. The revolutions in the human understanding have been as numerous as the changes men have experienced in their relative situations; hence the vocabularies of languages increased and de-



creased alternately, both in number and size: many were forgotten or engrafted on others, and new ones were formed.

I shall not mention those periods, which witnessed, when the bold and the strong enslaved his fellow man; when the lazy became guilty of theft, and the stupid sold his liberty; but, I wish it were possible to mention the name of him, who became the earthly benefactor of man, by teaching him the art of agriculture. To him, immortal statues are due. To him, we are all indebted for the regular development of the human mind, which began in that important period. Men, who had until then been scattered and dispersed, frequently warring against each other for food, began to connect themselves, and form large societies. In interchanging their ideas, they enriched their languages. The heroic time followed. Ambition made heroes, and produced tyrants. But languages were still transient, instantaneous sounds, lost as soon as uttered, and traditions

were the only records of all the mighty deeds. He who had sacked a city, destroyed its inhabitants and laid waste a territory, wished to perpetuate his bloody deeds, and emblematical figures, called hieroglyphics, were invented. Nevertheless the same language remained subdivided into many irregular parts; that is to say, each man, according to the sphere he moved in, could only know a part of the general vocabulary, which constituted the language of a distinct people;—this continued, with various modifications, until the great era of the invention of letters, which chronologists ascribe to Memnon, the Egyptian. This great discovery enabled those, whose superiority of intellect had elevated them above their fellow men, to embody the numerous dialects spoken by the same people, into a language. All the words and expressions already known, were collected; the language acquired a real consistence, and the learned wrote and gave perpetuity to their thoughts. But this embodied language was only known by a few, who had ambition

enough and leisure to spend their juvenile years in acquiring, by study in the closet, a perfect knowledge of it. The national language was thereby divided into two parts; the first comprised the numerous dialects spoken by the several members of the same political body, which were attainable only by conversation, and required a long life, spent in constant intercourse with the several members of the same community. The second, comprised them all, and was attainable by dint of study. The first remained subdivided and circumscribed within each man's sphere, and formed what may be called the dialects of the vulgar; the second, was the language of the learned;—the first made but little improvement if any; the second multiplied its collections;—the one, were transient sounds, easily lost; the other, was durable; and as years weighed on the past, drove and sunk each other alternatively into the abyss of time, they grew into two distinct languages. He who carried his thoughts as high as the stars, and dived into futurity, made

use of words and expressions which were not understood by him, whose mind remained fettered within a narrow compass.

Already the Babylonian, the Chaldean and Chinese monarchies had grown formidable, and large cities stood on the same spots, where shepherds had grazed their flocks. The Egyptians were engaged in building those superb towers, whose stupendous size were to strike future generations with admiration, and remain for ever monuments of the servitude of the people and the tyranny of their masters. Moses flying from tyranny, carried with him the rich collection made by the Egyptians; a language rendered copious by the increased discoveries of past ages, and comprehending the terms and expressions made use of by the learned to impart their profound thoughts, and those uttered by the artist, the mechanic and husbandman. See how he leads his host of Hebrews; detains them forty years in the desert, and after their hoary heads had descended into the silent tomb, and



the child and the babe were grown to manhood, moulded and trained up as it were by his hands, he then marches with this renewed race into the long promised land; however, he only leads them into the land of Moab, and lays it waste; but his successor, Joshua, introduced them into Canaan; sacked, burnt, and destroyed every city; cut off thirty-one kings and people; even the hoary head, who sighed after the grave, and the beauteous virgin who anticipated pleasurable days; the blooming bride, who already bore the wished-for fruit of her tender love, and the innocent, graceful, and smiling babe and infant; they all fell as an atonement for the idolatry their forefathers had taught to their parents. As many people as were destroyed, were as many languages or dialects lost and blotted out from the general catalogue. The Hebrew people and their language, (which undoubtedly was the Egyptian) were transplanted and thrived upon the smoking ashes of others. Thus, have been cut off and destroyed those over grown and mighty empires, which have

oppressed and terrified the earth by turns, and given place to other people and languages. The Assyrian made way for the Persian, which was swallowed up by the Greek; the Roman grew a monster upon their united ruins, and at last fell and sunk, under the renewed attacks of innumerable hosts of northern barbarians: Rome, the mistress of the world, surrendered to the Gothic chieftain Alaric.

The subversion of empires has often been productive of considerable good towards the developement of the human mind, the progress of knowledge, and the advancement of languages. The Hebrews, writers say, acquired new ideas on the immortality of the soul by their being carried into captivity to Babylon; and while Confucius taught reason and philosophy to the docile Chinese, Cambyzes was incensed on seeing the learned Egyptians falling prostrate at the feet of their god Osiris: Solomon was proclaiming an only and perfect God, and found but a few real believers; while Homer,

who was creating them by hundreds as wicked as he knew men to be, saw people and nations worship them as their supreme divinities. Lycurgus became a republican, whilst seeking wisdom under despotic princes, and when he was teaching kings to become citizens, and citizens to be kings, Macedonia was bending its neck to receive the yoke of a tyrant. Athens, so celebrated for her wisdom, her sages, her arts, and sciences, sent her phalanx under Xenophon, to help a Persian king to increase the number of his slaves; and put Socrates to death for daring to be virtuous!

During those mighty conflicts, between folly and reason, ignorance and philosophy, slavery and independence, the sacred fire of liberty burst and spread its flames; the mind increased its treasures, and the soul acquired a new force and energy. The poets sung the deeds of the heroes; shaded the brows of both the warrior and the patriot with wreaths of unfading laurel, and immortalized the products of genius; the

historians penned the rise, progress, and fall of empires; and the legislators expounded the laws, which have so great an influence on the destiny of both men and nations. A noble emulation filled every heart, and even the warriors, crowned with laurel, sought a new road to fame; and Athens, by turns, free and enslaved, victorious and subdued; sometimes dictating the law, at others, receiving it from the conqueror, preserved unobscured, the bright luminaries she had produced; they shone on the world and enlightened it. After the example of Alexandria, a large library was formed, which became the depository of original manuscripts and copies from the ancients, which together, contained all the products of the human mind and the efforts of genius. But with a view to preserve their beauteous and rich language from barbarism, and transmit it chaste and unsullied to their posterity, they formed a regular body of grammarians or critics. Thus, Athens became both the repository and nursery of learning. Kings and princes,



the free man, and he, whose body is at the command of a despot, but whose elastic mind cannot be fettered, repaired thither, from distant countries and nations, with a view to receive lessons on philosophy, letters, arts, and manners.

When the Romans sent ambassadors to Athens, to obtain a copy of Solon's laws, their language (the Latin) was yet as rough and unpolished, as the block of wood which they worshipped; or perhaps as uncouth, as the massy stone they received as being the mother of the gods, from the hands of the best man amongst them. They were, then, greater warriors than philosophers, and more fond of strife than learning. But when they had extended their conquests; when the plebeians, feeling like men, disputed the power usurped over them by the haughty patricians; when learning was found necessary to gain an ascendancy over the populace; the rich plebeians and the grown despotic patricians, endeavoured to rival each other

in literature. Athens saw them entering her gates and fill her academies. They returned to Rome, after they had treasured up invaluable riches, and the Greek tongue became the classical language of the Romans: the enthusiast thought it derogatory, and vulgar in the extreme, to speak his vernacular tongue.

Rome had now subdued the world; her power was colossean, her arms irresistible and overwhelming. Carthage, her rival, was no more; and from the western coasts of Africa, which proudly bore the columns of Hercules, and stayed the fury of the Atlantic, to the far remote shores of the Red Sea; nations, people, and tribes, received and obeyed her imperious mandates. Jerusalem had fallen, and the undaunted Parthians trembled on their seeing her eagles crossing the Euphrates; Mount Caucasus stooped under her mighty weight, and the Scythians flew back terrified; the Euxine rolled its waves as if they were still carrying the relentless pursuers of the unfor-

tunate, and yet great Mithridates; the Danube swelled with pride on seeing its banks united by a majestic bridge, smiled at the irritated Rhine for refusing a passage to her victorious legions; and proud Albion, yet unarmed with the mighty trident of Neptune, like the Gauls, had fallen prostrate at the feet of the Cæsars. Nations, kingdoms, and republics, obeyed her laws, paid homage and reluctant obedience to that terrible and colossean idol; and thee, also, thou justly fair famed Greece, whose victories had raised crowds of pyramids to thy glory, and whose superiority of intellect had crowned them with monuments by far superior and more lasting than marble columns and statues; thou, the nursery of great men, and the seminary of the world, became but a dependent province of thy pupil Rome!

Wherever the triumphant eagles rested and imposed the Roman laws, they also introduced the Latin language; a language rendered copious by the accruing additions of ages, the en-

thusiasm of liberty, the researches of the learned, and the inexhaustible treasures gathered in Greece and Asia. Athens had taught Rome, and Rome instructed the world, which she ruled, as legislator and supreme lord; but at the height of her glory, her citizens, corrupted by Asiatic luxury, grew effeminate; and whilst her name kept still the world in awe, they became slaves to each new succeeding tyrant. Liberty had fled from her walls, and patriotism vanished with the king-like name of Roman citizen. Torn by internal commotions, attacked on every side, she fell—and like Carthage, her former rival, offered no longer but the dismal skeleton of her past grandeur; her vast empire was dismembered and broken into pieces by innumerable hosts of northern barbarians; who successively pressed on each other, like the billows, when the sea irritated by tempests, opens its abysses, rises, roars, and swells into mountains, pressing and driving each other forward, till the northern winds are exhausted and a calm succeeds.



With Rome, perished the records of the products of genius, the monuments of past glory, and the models of the arts. The Latin tongue made room for the barbarian dialects of the conquerors, and the world nearly sunk into the ignorance of the first ages. But God, who watches over the destiny of men, did not then permit Constantinople to share the ill-fated lot of her mother Rome. The manuscripts, inclosed within the walls of that city, escaped the destroying hands of the invaders, and served in future times as a literary alphabet for the revival of letters.

The manuscripts, that were thus preserved, remained, as it were, secreted for centuries in the convents of the monks, and the closets of the priests, who were then the only persons who yet understood the learned languages. The numerous dialects, introduced by the invaders, were still unembodied by writing; for it is doubtful, whether the great Charlemagne knew how to read and write the language he spoke; certain it is, that he knew not the Latin. In this

general state of ignorance, kings and princes, with a view to administer justice in matters that common usages could not determine, had from necessity, to employ monks and priests to expound and explain such fragments of ancient laws as had here and there escaped from the general desolation; they even performed the function of judges. In consequence of which, many of the ancient Roman laws were revived and transcribed in Latin. However, this language was, as it were, the property of a few only. It was not to be attained by the degraded slaves, and their haughty masters thought it beneath their dignity to spend years in acquiring a knowledge of it. In the mean time, the schismaticist had formed new plans and met with contrary schemes; the schismatics had differed in tenets and encountered rebuffs and oppositions from the church; the scholiasts disagreed in their explanations; astrologers quarrelled with astronomers; divisions, jealousy; perhaps a desire of fame, or the more noble desire of being useful to mankind, brought on a conflict

of opinion; the relics of antiquity were searched and produced; gleams of light issued from the cloister and the cabinet, and began to dispel the gloom that pervaded Europe. Besides, the ecclesiastics had not yet been commanded by the pontiff of the court of Rome, to break the sacred ties of nature and conjugal union; their interests were still connected with those of society; they married, had a partner of their bosom; children to love; a country to respect; useful members of society, they enjoyed the prerogatives and rights of citizens, and the privileges of ministers of a holy religion. Hence, in their fraternal intercourse with their fellow-citizens, they instructed them as men, and from the pulpit, spake to them as ambassadors from the Almighty: they worked persuasion. Moved by feelings of paternal love, and a due respect for their character, they instructed their children and even their relatives, and imparted to them their whole stock of knowledge. This double connection of the ecclesiastics with society, and the church, was productive of mani-

fold advantages towards the improvement of the human understanding and the advancement of modern languages.

The modern languages were already embodied, and had made some progress towards perfection. Each of them partook more or less of the several dialects introduced by the successive invaders—they were subdivided and marked the origin of the several people that spoke them. These mongrel dialects formed the languages spoken by the slaves, and are yet spoken with some deviations, by the peasantry and poorer class on the continent of Europe. The written languages, formed of several dialects, took a degree of refinement, and were the languages spoken by the courts, the higher ranks of society, the ecclesiastic, and the free men, with all their natural deformities, and the mixture each one made, with the dialect of his native province.

With a view to diffuse knowledge, acade-



mies were formed, and shortly after, universities were founded. The modern languages received considerable additions; the Latin tongue was stripped to give to them regularity, beauty, and energy. Notwithstanding these great improvements, there being no general standard, the learned continued to pen their productions in the Latin tongue, which circumstance was productive of much delay and impeded the progress of modern languages.

In Britain, the national language had made but little progress on account of the peculiar political situation of that country. After the Romans had withdrawn their armies, it remained exposed to the incursions of the Picts and Scots. Vortigern invited the Saxons to come and help the British to chastise their enemies; but they would be masters of a people whom they had been called to defend, and the subsequent landing of other Saxons established the Heptarchy. The Saxon language was already ingrafted on the British and was improving,

when the repeated invasions of the Danes brought on new wars and revolutions, which were undoubtedly productive of considerable alterations. Nevertheless, it was still in that state of rudeness which unfitted it to express the various conceptions of an improved mind, when William, duke of Normandy, landed, fought and conquered. The victor, in dictating his laws, imposed also his language on his new subjects, and the French became in England, the language of the court and nobles, the clergy and the free men. The annals of England assert, that in the year 1095, Ulstan, bishop of Worcester, was deprived of his bishopric for not understanding French; and in the year 1362, Edward the 3d, granted as a favour to his people, that law pleadings should be changed from French into English. During a series of three hundred successive years, this language was in a great measure national, inasmuch, that all governmental and civil acts were written in French. Therefore, all persons above the degraded state of a slave, were in-

interested in acquiring a knowledge of it. When it ceased by the concession of Edward, to be the language used in civil laws, one half of it at least was actually retained, and is found embodied with the English language, where it has preserved its old etymology, which is hardly discernible in the present polished French language.

The great era for the general diffusion of knowledge was fast approaching; it was preceded by a general emancipation of slaves in France and other countries. Was this the work of a philanthropic mind? No; the barons were warring against their sovereigns, to whom many of them were more than an equal match. The sovereigns, to retain their thrones, must increase their power. They created hosts of freed men, who became the natural supporters of him to whom they owed their liberty, and the before mighty barons fell prostrate at the feet of their disliked sovereigns. What virtue and reason could not have effected, ambition achieved, and

cities became for the wretched and oppressed inhabitants of the country, what the cities of refuge had been to the oppressed Israelites. The haughty barons and ignorant nobles sequestered themselves in their castles, disdain- ing to administer justice, which duty was still incumbent upon them: they thought it too bur- thensome, or rather derogatory, and commis- sioned freed men to act in their stead. These grasped with eagerness at a power which they were only to exercise for others, but which they soon claimed as a part of their privileges. To dispense justice and understand the laws, they were obliged to study the learned lan- guages. The barons and nobles retained their ignorance and their pride; the freed men, or commons, grew into power; they became le- gislators, historians, poets, philosophers, and scientific men.

The art of printing was at this time invented and tolerably improved. Manuscripts were printed and knowledge began to be more



widely diffused. The modern languages, enriched and adorned by the ancients, grew into solid and durable bodies. The Latin, stripped of all its beauties, reduced to a skeleton, remained as it were upon a death bed. The study of the Greek was also revived; their poets, historians and orators, were patterns for imitation; we were to be pleased, amused, and be made angry, as the Greeks were, and eat and drink as they did. That enthusiasm was however productive of much good; it gave us a taste for polite literature, adorned our minds, and taught us to express our ideas with elegance and dignity.

Near five hundred years had now elapsed since the ecclesiastics had been severed from the ties that had attached them to society: they were strangers in their native country; the voice of sentiment was stifled, and the inspirations of the heart had yielded to seduction, or rather to the fear and terror inspired by the court of Rome. The

marriage of the ecclesiastics ordered by the ancient law and adopted by the primitive church, had been proscribed, their wives had been dishonoured by the unmerited epithet of concubines, and their unhappy children had been victims devoted to contempt, opprobrium, and misery. Thus severed from all that was endearing to their hearts, the ecclesiastics became the vile instruments of persecutions, cruelties, and crimes of every kind, in the hands of the all ambitious court of Rome. That city had grown upon the ashes of ancient Rome, who had conquered the world by the force of her arms; the new, headed by ambitious pontiffs, also aimed at universal power, and in the name of a meek and infinitely just God, perpetrated the most heinous crimes, such as nature abhors. Her armies composed of millions, carried with them the thunders of excommunication, the dagger, the poison, the rack, and the fire; they had broken loose the ties that united the people with their sovereigns; and the domination of new Rome was felt every where. Corrupt, tyrannical, and re-

vengeful, justice was sacrificed to ambition; humanity to avarice; religion to fanaticism; and all manner of crimes could be atoned for and redeemed with money. Such was the baneful and destructive influence of the sacerdotal power, when Reform began. This forms a great era for the perfection of modern languages. The thunders from the Vatican, did not deter men from searching truth in the scriptures. The people must be spoken to, detached from the church, or be retained in it. Controversies were not to be written in Latin, a language with which the people was unacquainted; they must be written in the vulgar tongues. Each side showed itself fertile in arguments, fruitful in resources, keen in replies, rich in expressions, sublime in ideas, and the productions of the moderns began to rival those of the ancients. Men, who in spite of repeated excommunications, the rack, the fire, and the sword, had dared to investigate religion in the sacred volumes, and to assault the much redoubted and before held sacred fortifications of the church of Rome, were not to confine

their inquiries to religious matters only. They discussed the political rights of man; they inquired into the essence and end of civil societies; they selected patterns; they contrasted the superior capacity and character of a free man, with the degrading and humiliating condition of a slave. In Greece, they saw kings descending from the throne, to take the superior title of citizens; and other kings and tyrants hurled from their regal seats. Numbers of petty states rising to liberty and independence, and by a combination of their forces growing more than a match for the despotic sovereigns of Asia. They saw Tarquin pursued by the avenging hand of Brutus, and a mighty republic rising upon the ruins of monarchy. They saw Julius Cæsar, crowned with unfaded laurels, a writer, a hero, the most liberal and clement of conquerors, weltering in blood, flowing from the wounds inflicted by the hand of a republican son, for aiming at regal power. Enraptured by the charms of liberty, inflamed with the noble desire of instructing their fellow men, they



wrote, and their works shook and astonished the world. Fully competent for the task, they equalled, nay, they even excelled the ancients. The modern languages were then found to unite the graces of the Greek with the masculine strength of the Latin; copious, strong, bold, harmonious, energetic and numerous, they became perfectly classic.

After the example of the ancients, the moderns formed libraries and bodies of critics, who were to polish the languages. Dictionaries were compiled, and comprised all the words, together with their several definitions, or the sense each one expresses and conveys to the mind. These words were analysed and classed according to their essence, attributes, and functions. Grammar was made a rudiment leading to the principles of all thoughts, and teaching by simple examples, the general classification of words and their subdivisions in expressing the various conceptions of the mind. Grammar is then the key to the perfect under-

standing of languages; without which we are left to wander all our lives, in an intricate labyrinth, without being able to trace back again any part of our way. It may here be said, that the body of man was made of clay, and his mind by the spirit of God, of which speech is the sensible image, and forms likewise a perfect whole; and as the arms, the legs, the eyes, the mouth, &c. are parts which perform separate functions inherent to the body, so the parts of speech in performing their relative functions are inherent parts of the spiritual body of the mind. Hence, he who knows but words without having been taught to analyse their various attributes, is as ignorant of the power and faculties of his mind, as a babe, in full possession of a perfectly constituted body, is of the use of its arms and legs, &c. with which he knows not yet how to help himself.

Every age has given birth to some of those ignorant and bold demagogues, who are heard crying down grammar, and calling it a mere

pedantic production, a useless study, unnecessary to the attainment of a language. Crowd the memory with words, they say, and languages will be sooner acquired without the use of either grammar or dictionary! These are sycophantic effusions, proclaiming the phrensy of an empty head. Reason discards such a rant, and the experience of ages gives the lie to the delirium of these self-conceited and self-beloved philosophers.

Every man moves in a particular sphere, the horizon of which is either small or extended, according to his situation in life. He who is brought up to shoe-making, will move in a much narrower circle than he who is building a ship. The degrees of distance between them from a common point, will be nearly in the compound proportions existing between a steam-boat and a simple canoe. Therefore, he who will know words only, will find his attainment in language equal to the making of canoes as they were always made; but he who has ac-

quired his language by analysis, that is to say grammatically, will be competent to form ideas as compound as the machineries of a steam-boat. This difference is produced by the requisite compound operations of the mind, in order to regulate the proportions to be given to every thing entering in the perfect construction of a ship and a steam-boat, and the nothingness of the mind in the making of a shoe, and a canoe. Words do not instruct: they are mere representatives of sounds; but the analysis of ideas works upon the mind and teaches it to think. Let two boys of the same age and capacity be placed at a school. The one to learn his language, merely by spelling and reading, and the other grammatically. The first acquires the art of compounding syllables and uttering sounds; the sense of the words is neglected; the Bible is read over, the English Reader is mimicked, and neither of them are understood. The second acquires, in the same manner, both the compounding of syllables and the uttering of sounds; but he is also taught to class the



words according to the functions they perform in the discourse; he understands the idea of the author, criticises his defects, and becomes a judge of the language. The first has acquired words: the second, words and ideas; besides, these acquirements are still subordinate to the extent of their reading, which is extremely limited. In order to improve the subject, let us bring a third boy of the same age and capacity with the two others. He will, as they do, acquire spelling and reading; but the Latin, the Greek or the French are added to the English. A grammar and a dictionary are put in his hands. He proceeds slowly at first; but as he proceeds, he learns the classification of words. Virgil, Homer, and the French classics present themselves successively. Each new word offers him a new idea; he must understand his author before he writes; translating word for word would not do; the essence of the thought must be found; he thinks, compares, and composes. He did not intend learning the English, and yet there is not a word in the English language,

that he has not been obliged to use repeatedly, in translating his Latin, Greek and French authors. His mind is grown luxuriant with the products of ancient and modern genius, and he is already a learned man, when he is hardly sixteen years old.

But where are the two other boys when arrived at the age of manhood? The first mimicks words as his father did; the second is a citizen of sound judgment, who has, perhaps, adorned his mind with polite literature; and the third? Ready to embark on the wide sea of abstract sciences, a voyage, from which he will return fully prepared to take his flight into higher regions, and there stand as a bright luminary diffusing light upon his native country.

Had it not been for his dictionary and his grammar, which taught him the essence of all languages, and the natural subdivision of their component parts, he might have spent a life as long as Methuselah's, in learning words with-

out being able to attain to a degree of perfection in any of the languages.

I confess that all those that have attempted to learn the Latin, Greek and French, have not grown stars in the heaven; no, but they generally form that class of men which produces able statesmen and skilful politicians; legislators and philosophers; historians and poets; divines and civilians; physicians and scientific men. Many, indeed, from a defect of intellect or other causes, sit quietly in obscurity among the crowd that surrounds the elegant and solid temple of knowledge: they were satisfied with casting a glance at the portico, they never viewed the beauties of the inside. Besides, it may be said that the attainment of one or several languages is considered by many as a mere matter of fashion, which changes just as the particular colour or shape of a coat, that is laid aside at the appearance of a new one. This is daily verified, and particularly in the attainment of the French language, which of late

seems to be a distinctive quality of a gentleman throughout the world. The two-thirds at least of all those who present themselves to be admitted into the temple of French literature, are led to it, it seems, by a spirit of fashion, without having either the design or the wish to sit in it as members;—they submit to the ordeals of the ceremony of admission, ascend one or two of the steps that lead up to the peristyle, where stand the majestic columns of the temple, and then disappear, there to be seen no more. The French falls instantly out of fashion with them, and is replaced by the Hebrew, the German, the Spanish, drawing, music, and dancing, which successively meet with the same fate. This fickleness in fashions, has been the ground work upon which demagogues have built the edifice of public and private deception. One of them being asked by a sensible man, how he could have made such publications as filled the columns of every newspaper, and given his word of honour, that, by the mere mimicking of a few phrases, articulated by



hundreds at the same time, he would in three short months, make them partakers in all the beauties of French literature, and enable them them to read, hear, speak, and write French perfectly well, deliberately answered, "I must  
 "make the French grow into fashion, and as I  
 "know it will soon be out of it, till then I shall  
 "teach them how to count from one to a hundred; then the Lord's prayer, and a few such  
 "phrases as, *Je mange un pain de trois livres à mon déjeûner*, I eat a three pound loaf at my  
 "breakfast: *Comment-vous portez-vous*, how  
 "do ye do, and the like, &c. &c. It is all they  
 "want, and need to know." "Well," replied the gentleman, "I understand you perfectly,  
 "and thank you for thus relieving my mind;  
 "for had you convinced me that you were  
 "able to perform what you promised to the  
 "public, I would instantly have got hold of a  
 "rope and hung myself, for my having spent  
 "years in acquiring, what you promised to do  
 "in a few lessons."

Whether the now refined modern languages will meet with the fate of the Greek and Latin, and become, in their turns, dead classical languages, for new people rising upon the ruins of those now existing, or be transmitted living by succeeding and endless generations, to the farthest end of time, is only known by Him, who is the great dispenser of all good, and who makes men and languages, the rise and fall of nations and empires, subservient to his great purposes, as tending towards the end designed by the works of his creation.

In the foregoing discourse, I have endeavoured to trace the principal features and causes of the revolutions that have taken place in languages; how they have branched out from one into many; how several of them were lost and destroyed, and new ones were formed, and increased on the remains of others; by what accidents and subversions of people and empires, the most enlightened and perfect languages ceased to be spoken, and were replaced

by numerous rude and barbarous dialects; and how these dead languages, being partly revived, served to improve and enrich the living, to a degree of perfection far surpassing the polished Greek and the manly Latin. I shall, therefore, discard the subject, to look for the best method of teaching foreign languages. Ten years experience have enabled me to discover where the old and new methods were defective, and to make teaching perfectly analogous to the very essence and nature of languages.

The first of these is the fact that the  
the second is the fact that the  
the third is the fact that the  
the fourth is the fact that the  
the fifth is the fact that the  
the sixth is the fact that the  
the seventh is the fact that the  
the eighth is the fact that the  
the ninth is the fact that the  
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The first of these is the fact that the  
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# AN ESSAY

ON THE

*Best Method of Teaching*

FOREIGN LANGUAGES,

AS ADAPTED TO THE FRENCH,

BY THE AUTHOR.

SINCE the invention of letters, languages have grown into three component parts. First, the uttering of sounds, as expressive of our thoughts, and which may be properly called, *the language of the tongue*. Second, the proper value of sounds representing the thoughts of others, and which are conveyed to the understanding through the organ of hearing, which we will call *the language of the ear*. Third, the combination of letters, as represen-

tative of sounds, and serving to embody the various conceptions of the mind, may be called *the language of the understanding*. It is necessary to acquire these three parts with equal perfection, in order to possess a perfect knowledge of a modern language.

The manner by which we are taught from childhood, to acquire a knowledge of our vernacular tongue, is by means of letters; therefore, we are to be taught the first and second parts, through the third.

I distribute the generality of those that attempt at a knowledge of foreign languages, into four classes:

The first comprises boys, whose acquired vocabulary of words is small.

The second comprise young and grown men, who are acquainted with words only, the quantity of which is indeterminate.

The third comprises such, as understand their vernacular tongue grammatically, and are thereby able to analyse ideas.

The fourth comprises literary men, who possess the etymology of words, and consider them only as the constituent parts of thoughts, and need but analyse and compare them, to find their relative attributes and functions in expressing the conception of the mind.

Now if *the language of the tongue and the ear*, were not to be acquired, as in the dead languages, and learners were only to study the third part, that is to say, the *language of the understanding*, it would require three years' study for the first class; two years for the second; one year for the third; and *two months* only for the fourth. But if the first and second parts are added to the third, which together, constitute a knowledge of modern languages; the time requisite to acquire them, (I do not mean in perfection) will be found rather too

long in three and two years, (not generally,) nearly even in one year, and too short in two months. Therefore, the first and second classes will speak and hear when spoken to, long before they have attained a perfect knowledge of the third part. The third class will acquire the three component parts together, and at the same time; and the fourth class will be master of the third part, long before they either speak or understand the language of sounds. This parallel will be found correct, if it is considered that the faculty of uttering or flexibility of the tongue, as well as the sense of hearing, are pretty near equal in the four classes, whereas the intellectual powers are at vast distances from each other. This intellectual power may well be compared to a four horse race: the first of which is too young and weak to be able to run; the second is too clumsily built, to be any thing more than a heavy trotter; the third is a good galloper; but the fourth has all the nimbleness and swiftness of a first rate Arabian horse. They start together from the same point; and



behold, the Arabian horse runs over the race ground in two minutes, and gets the purse; the galloper is twelve minutes running the same distance; the heavy trotter is twenty-four minutes; and the young and weak horse is thirty-six minutes.

It will perhaps be said, that there are instances which may destroy the parallel I have just been laying down; but I say no: although I can produce boys and girls, endowed indeed, with an extraordinary intelligence of mind, and a retentive memory, who at twelve years of age, put men and Latin scholars to the blush; and in six months time, receiving only three lessons per week, acquired the three component parts of the French language (I do not say perfectly) but they spoke, heard, and wrote it tolerably well; yet they did not know the French language. I can produce crowds of young gentlemen, who after receiving about *forty-five* lessons from me, have been enabled to express simple ideas, to hear when spoken to, and write

grammatically; and yet they do not know the French language. I can produce ladies and gentlemen, whose progress have been astonishing; who in less than four months time, have written French under dictation, with as much correctness and facility as their vernacular tongue, and read French from English, with great ease, without a dictionary; and yet they do not know the French language. If it be asked why? I answer, it is because the acquisition has been too rapid to make a deep impression. All the parts acquired, have not been digested; they crowd on the mind and confuse it; a reiteration of action of the tongue is wanted to make it perfectly flexible and obedient; and the ear is not sufficiently acquainted with notes to discriminate the proper value of sounds. Therefore, the impressions produced are too light to be solid and durable, and may justly be compared to a rapid stroke of a pin upon a brass plate, which will disappear of itself, except by repeated strokes in the same

direction, the first impression be deepened, and thereby made as durable as the plate itself.

That method which puts all the faculties into action, by following nature's path, to make the three component parts that constitute a language attainable all at the same time, must undoubtedly be superior to all others, and conducive to the end proposed by the shortest way. This is the method I have adopted, and practice has crowned it with extraordinary success. I claim it as mine, being the fruit of several years research, observation, and inquiry.

It would require more time than I can conveniently bestow on it at present, to give a perfect description of this method; therefore, I shall only give the outlines of it, which will, I hope, be found sufficient to display its natural simplicity: but with a view to render it perfectly comprehensible, I shall proceed towards

it as if I were giving a few of the first lessons to a class of beginners.

Although a person learning singly, may reap all the advantages possible, yet, I consider it a profit mutually advantageous, when a class is composed of two, three, four, and even six students. To have a number, let us suppose it to be four.

### *First Lesson.*

Every student being provided with a *grammar*, an *exercise book* upon the accidence and the rules of the language, and a *copy book* to write in, the class opens by pronouncing the alphabet, after which we immediately pass to the nouns; I explain their nature, the genders, and how to form the numbers; the nature and use of the articles, how they are simple and contracted; and each having the same ex-



amples in his hand, I pronounce distinctly every example, which is repeated alternately by every member of the class, in such a manner, that every member hears the same words he is to pronounce repeated successively five times. These examples, which are the great standards for the proper use of the articles, are to be committed to memory. But with a view to make a lasting impression upon the mind, we open the exercise book, in which a series of English sentences are prepared. The student is taught to translate them into French, according to the proper acceptation of every noun. This translation they write in a copy book. Being satisfied they understand well the part they have been called to exercise upon, much of it must be done at home. We then pass to a series of short French sentences, having the English translation by the side. I pronounce distinctly the first sentence; it is repeated by the first on the right hand, then by the second, the third, the fourth, successively, one after the other. While they thus repeat, I

correct the defects in the pronunciation, and we proceed through in the same manner. By this easy and simple method, the eye views the combination of letters, and compares the French with the English word answering to it; the tongue is taught to articulate the sounds represented by the letters, and by the repetition of the same sentence a number of times over, the ear begins to discriminate the proper value of each sound. These comprise the first lesson.

### *Second Lesson.*

The class opens by repeating without a book and in the same manner as before described, the examples given on the articles and the nouns. After which, every one produces the translation he has been charged to do at home; the faults, if any, are corrected, and the parts upon which they have been exercising, are farther illustrated. The grammar is open-

ed, and we successively pass under review all the pronouns. Their nature and use are explained and illustrated by *sensible* examples; after which we pronounce them separately, by repeating as before stated. These are to be committed to memory. A new series of French sentences are pronounced and repeated as before. The text for exercises to be made at home is given, and the second lesson closes.

### *Third Lesson.*

The task is examined and corrected, the lessons repeated, and we pass to the verbs. I illustrate this interesting subject by sensible examples. I explain the essence and use of the auxiliaries; their agency in forming the compound tenses of all the other verbs; how it is done; how they are made negative and interrogative, &c. &c.; after which we pronounce *four* of them, which are repeated as before stat-

ed. A new series of French sentences is pronounced as before, and the text for French exercises is given. Every scholar from this day, is to repeat four verbs every lesson.

*Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Lessons.*

We have been proceeding through several new parts, which have all been explained and illustrated, and the students have already learnt twelve of the principal verbs; therefore their numerous terminations offer no longer any difficulty: but to continue to say verbs merely as they are in all the grammars, would only give us a knowledge of the verb itself, and leave us ignorant of the mode of using it. This is not enough; we must repeat them as if we were either speaking or writing; that is to say, by forming complete propositions; and it is here that I introduce the great and important discovery I have made on the nature, attributes and function of personal pronouns, which stand



always as a stumbling block in the way of those learning the French language. I shall publish it here, for the use of my scholars, who have never seen the table I now offer, although they have been taught the same by practical demonstration.

Personal pronouns are two-fold—the proper, and the relative personal.

The proper, is that pronoun which stands always in the place of a proper name of men and women only, and cannot be used either for irrational beings or things. They are:

*Moi, toi, lui, elle, soi.    Nous, vous, eux, elles.*

And as they represent proper names, they have also the same syntax, without one single exception; either they precede or follow the verbs.

The relative personal, are these, which stand for the antecedent members of a proposition,

and not for proper names; they cannot receive any preposition. Their Syntax is even contrary to that of the substantives which are their relative antecedent, and they represent singly, the several members of a proposition, whose functions they perform, either as subject, object, or term of all propositions. I class them in the following manner:

[To face page 70.]

BER.

representing the accusative compound. un representing the dative for irrational beings and things.

1st Per	of or from me	
2d do	of or from thee	to it, there, in it, &c.
	or from, him or it	to it, in it, &c.
	or from, her or it	to it, in it, there, &c.
3d do	of him, her or itself	above.
	e.	

1st Per	of or from u	
2d do	of or from yo	to them, there, in them, &c.
	of or from the	to them, in them, about
	of or from the	them, &c.
3d do		above.
	of themself	





# T A B L E.

[To face page 70.]

FIRST MEMBER.		SECOND MEMBER.		THIRD MEMBER.	
PERSONS.	Pronouns representing the nominative.	Pronouns representing the accusative simple.	Pronouns representing the accusative compound.	Pronouns representing the dative for Persons.	Pronouns representing the dative for irrational beings and things.
<b>SINGULAR.</b>					
1st Person—both genders	<i>Je,</i> . . . . . I	<i>me,</i> . . . . . me	<i>en,</i> . . . . . of or from me	<i>me,</i> . . . . . to me	
2d do. —both genders	<i>Tu,</i> . . . . . thou	<i>te,</i> . . . . . thee	<i>en,</i> . . . . . of or from thee	<i>te,</i> . . . . . to thee	
3d do. {	masculine . . . . . <i>Il,</i> . . . . . he, it	<i>le,</i> . . . . . him or it	<i>en,</i> . . . . . of or from, him or it	<i>lui,</i> . . . . . to him	<i>y,</i> . . . . . to it, there, in it, &c.
	feminine . . . . . <i>Elle,</i> . . . . . she, or it	<i>la,</i> . . . . . her or it	<i>en,</i> . . . . . of or from, her or it	<i>lui,</i> . . . . . to her	<i>y,</i> . . . . . to it, in it, &c.
	reflective . . . . . <i>Il or elle,</i> . . . . . he, she or it	<i>se,</i> . . . . . him, her or itself	<i>en,</i> of or from him, her or itself	<i>se,</i> . . . . . to him or to herself	<i>y,</i> . . . . . to it, in it, there, &c.
	indeterminate . . . . . <i>On,</i> one, they, people, we, it, is, &c.	the above.	the above.	the above.	the above.
<b>PLURAL.</b>					
1st Person—both genders	<i>Nous,</i> . . . . . we	<i>nous,</i> . . . . . us	<i>en,</i> . . . . . of or from us	<i>nous,</i> . . . . . to us	
2d do. —both genders	<i>Vous,</i> . . . . . you	<i>vous,</i> . . . . . you	<i>en,</i> . . . . . of or from you	<i>vous,</i> . . . . . to you	
3d do. {	masculine . . . . . <i>Ils,</i> . . . . . they	<i>les,</i> . . . . . them	<i>en,</i> . . . . . of or from them	<i>leur,</i> . . . . . to them	<i>y,</i> to them, there, in them, &c.
	feminine . . . . . <i>Elles,</i> . . . . . they	<i>les,</i> . . . . . them	<i>en,</i> . . . . . of or from them	<i>leur,</i> . . . . . to them	<i>y,</i> to them, in them, about them, &c.
	reflective . . . . . <i>Ils or elles,</i> . . . . . they	<i>se,</i> . . . . . themselves	<i>en,</i> . . . . . of themselves	<i>se,</i> . . . . . to themselves	the above.

Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely from a 17th or 18th-century manuscript. The text is arranged in approximately 15 lines, though it is extremely faded and difficult to decipher. It appears to be a formal letter or a legal document, given the structured nature of the writing.

Continuation of the handwritten text, also in cursive script. This section contains about 10 lines of text. The ink is very light, and the paper shows signs of age, including yellowing and some staining. The handwriting is consistent with the top section, suggesting it is part of the same document.

With a view to illustrate the use of the foregoing table, which distributes the several functions the relative personal pronouns perform, I shall explain first, what I mean by members of a proposition: secondly, the division of those members, into nominative, accusative simple, and accusative compound, and dative for person, and dative for irrational beings and things. After which I shall give the only two rules, the application of which will make all the difficulties disappear.

I consider that a proposition, to be perfect, must be composed of *three members*, either expressed or understood; that whatever may be added are either the circumstances, attributes, restrictions and modifications, belonging to either the one or the other, and which may be reproduced together or separately, until the subject is exhausted; these three members form the compound body of a perfect proposition, as when I say:

*Moses* gave the *ten commandments* to the *Israelites*. Here I consider *Moses* as the first member; *the ten commandments*, as the second member; *to the Israelites*, as the third; but if I add: *who ungratefully rejected them to worship a golden calf*; I find that *who*, representing the third member of the first proposition, is become the first member of the second; *them* meaning *the ten commandments*, is the second, and *to worship a golden calf*, is a reproduction of the first member, with a new second member.

The first member is the subject, either original or reproduced, and to which grammarians give the name of *a nominative*.

The second member is the object, either original or reproduced, under two different forms, and called the *accusative simple and compound*.

The third member is the term of a proposition or otherwise the farthest end, an action and



state of being can be carried, either original or reproduced, and called, *Dative for persons*, and *Dative for irrational beings and things*.

The third person of the first, the second and third members, are originally substantives expressed or understood, which become the antecedent of the same members reproduced by the pronouns. When the several members are represented by substantives, in all simple and regular constructions, in French as in English, they take the same place; that is to say, the 1st member before the verb; the 2d member after the verb, and the 3d member after the 2d member.

### EXAMPLE.

<sup>1</sup>Jesus <sup>2</sup>Christ inspire la <sup>3</sup>Sainteté à ses disciples.

<sup>1</sup>Jesus <sup>2</sup>Christ inspires holiness in his <sup>3</sup>followers.

But when these original members are reproduced by pronouns, in English, they preserve the same syntax with their antecedent; in French, both the 2d and 3d members are transposed and placed before the verb.

### EXAMPLE.

<sup>1</sup>He (Jesus Christ) <sup>2</sup>inspires it (holiness) <sup>3</sup>in them  
(his followers.)

<sup>1</sup>Il <sup>2</sup>la, <sup>3</sup>leur inspire.

The transposition is here very sensible; but to make a further illustration of what I mean, (not by the 1st member called nominative, it is generally understood,) but by the second member, divided into accusative simple, and compound, and by the third member, also divided into dative for persons and irrational beings and things, I shall proceed thus:

*Peter gives the book.* Suppose I had said, *Peter gives*, you would naturally have asked what? The answer would be, *the book, le livre*; or, *the bible, la bible*; or, *the flowers, les fleurs*. *Le livre, the book; la bible, the bible; les fleurs, the flowers*, are *accusative simple*; because they are preceded by no preposition, either expressed or understood; and these being original members, I shall only take the articles that precede them, and placing the same before their verbs, they will perform the functions of the substantives to which they were auxiliaries.

## EXAMPLE.

I give *it* (the book), I give *it* (the bible), I give *them* (the flowers.)

Je *le* donne, (*le livre*), Je *la* donne, (*la bible*),  
Je *les* donne, (*les fleurs*.)

And in

He loves *me*, I love *thee*, they love *us*, she loves *you*, they love *themselves*, &c. &c.

Il *m'aime*, Je *t'aime*, ils *nous aiment*, elle *vous aime*, ils *s'aiment*.

I see no preposition, expressed nor understood before the pronouns *me*, *me*; *thee*, *te*; *us*, *nous*; *you*, *vous*; *themselves*, *se*. Therefore, these pronouns, together with *le*, *la*, *les*, in the first example, represent the *Accusative Simple of the Second Member*.

The accusative compound, shows itself preceded by either of the prepositions *of* or *from*, *de*, expressed or understood, as in the following examples:

*He sells books or some books, paper, ink, and good pens.*



Il vend, *des livres, du papier, de l'encre et de bonnes plumes.*

Every noun in the French example, is preceded by the preposition *de*, which is contracted with the article only, in *des* and *du*; therefore, the nouns it precedes, represent the *accusative compound*, because of the compound idea which it conveys to the mind. Although this preposition *of* or *from*, is not expressed in the English example, yet it is however understood; for after the indeterminate numerical adjective *some*, there is an ellipsis, which being filled, includes *of the*, and means the same as if it had been said, He sells some *of the* books, *of the* paper, *of the* ink, and *of the* good pens. This may, perhaps, appear extraordinary to some persons; but to prove it all at once, it is only necessary to change the substantives into pronouns, and the preposition *of*, will appear instantly:

*He sells some of them (books), some of it (paper), some of it (ink), some of them (good pens.)*

And in

He speaks *of me, of thee, of him, of her, of it, of us, of you, of them.* I see all these pronouns preceded by the preposition *of*; therefore, when the preposition *of* or *from, de*, is seen after a verb preceding a noun or pronoun, expressed or understood, as in the above examples, these nouns and pronouns represent the *accusative compound of the second member*; the pronoun *en*, simply, expresses it in French, because of its being common to both genders and numbers.

EXAMPLE.

He sells <i>books</i> ,	Il vend <i>des livres</i> .
He sells <i>some of them</i> ,	Il <i>en</i> vend.
He comes <i>from New York</i> ,	Il vient <i>de New York</i> .
He comes <i>from there</i> ,	Il <i>en</i> vient.

The third member is called the Dative, and is the object to which the nominative has conveyed the accusative, or the farther term, an action, or state of being expressed by the verb can be carried, to make a proposition perfect; as when I say, *Thomas sold his horses to Mr. White*. Here *Mr. White*, is the dative, to whom *Thomas* has conveyed *his horses*, through the channel of the proposition *to*; therefore, I may say, he sold them *to him*, or *to her*, or *to them*, or *to me*, *to thee*, *to us*, *to you*, and all these pronouns, preceded as they are by the preposition *to*, represent the third member, called *the Dative for person*. Frequently, the second member is not expressed, and it is so with neutral verbs which receive no accusative, as, *I walked to the play*. *I live in Philadelphia*. *I went into the house*. *I go to that place, there, or thither*, &c. &c. *To the play, in Philadelphia, into the house, to that place there, or thither*, represent the dative for things, &c. and are the farther terms of the action expressed by the several verbs; it is expressed in French by

Y, a pronoun common to both genders and numbers.

If I have been so very particular in defining what I mean, by *accusative* and *dative*, it is because these denominations are not always understood by those who have only learnt the English grammar. Such as are acquainted with the Latin, will not thank me for keeping them so long from the promised rules. However, they will lie under some obligation, for my having retained those denominations which they already understand.

The accusative and dative pronouns must be placed before their verbs; it remains only to show how they take their places before the verb.



## FIRST RULE,

*Including the Nominative, the Accusative Simple, and the Dative for persons.*

When the dative is represented by a pronoun of the third person, both singular and plural, it takes its place immediately before the verb, and after the accusative; but on the contrary, when a dative is represented by a pronoun of the first and second persons, both singular and plural, the dative is then placed before the accusative.

## EXAMPLE.

He gives them *to him*. Il les *lui* donne.

Here, *to him*, *lui*, is a pronoun of the third person; it is placed immediately before the verb, and after the accusative *les*.

*But on the contrary:*

He gives them *to me*. Il *me* les donne.

Here, *to me, me*, is a pronoun of the first person, representing the dative; it is placed before the accusative *les*.

## SECOND RULE.

*Including the Accusative Compound, and the Dative for things.*

When the accusative compound, and dative for things, come together, the dative precedes the accusative, which must always be placed next to the verb; but if they come separately, each one retains its place next to the verb, even to the exclusion of the other pronouns, which preserve the mutual order established by the first rule.

## EXAMPLE.

He sends *some* <sup>1</sup>*of them*, *thither*, <sup>2</sup>*there*, or *to that place*.

Il <sup>2</sup> *y*, <sup>1</sup> *en* envoie.

Here, *thither*, *there*, or *to that place*, *y*, represents the dative for things, and *some of them*, *en*, the accusative compound. According to the rule, *y*, the dative, precedes *en*, the accusative compound, which is always placed next to the verb.

*But if they come separately, as:*

I shall carry them to you, *thither* or *to that place*.

Je vous les *y* porterai.

Or,

I shall carry *some of them*, to them.

Je leur *en* porterai.

It is seen that, *thither* or *to that place*, *y*, and *some of them*, *en*, take their place immediately before the verb, and the other pronouns retain the place assigned to them by the first rule.

*The only exception,*

which is hardly worth mentioning, practice making it sensible and easy in *one minute's time*, is, that these pronouns are to be placed after the verb, in the imperative used affirmatively; but if used negatively, they preserve their places before the verb, according to the two above rules.

Now with the table I have offered, and the two only rules, which direct its proper use, the students know instantly as much about *the personal relative pronouns*, as ninety-nine Frenchmen out of one hundred; and much more about the attributes and functions of these pronouns, than the whole body of grammarians that have written on that subject; who, for want of a proper analysis of their relative functions, have not been able to class them as they ought; hence those numberless pages written, and each new rule contradicting the rule already given; many of them, after giving



eighteen pages of useless explanations, have been obliged to resort to arithmetical figures, to mark the place these pronouns are to take.

This table removes likewise, all the difficulties on the declension of the past participle of an active verb, construed with the auxiliary, *Avoir, to have*: a single rule, without one solitary exception, determines this most nice subject, upon which volumes have been written. I shall not give it here. I have already said more than I ought, if, as I apprehend, the mechanism displaying the operations of the mind, are not protected by law, as the manual mechanism is. Every improvement in the mechanical arts, is entitled to a patent, which secures to the improver the benefit of his improvement. I have as good a title to the protection and benefit of the law as they, and I would ask the same right and privileges, if the law would allow me so to do.

But to resume our principal subject, let us

recollect that we are still at our sixth lesson. The student being led into the secret essence and principle of the language, will be able to resolve the greatest difficulties. Nevertheless, his tongue will show itself a rebel still, because of its old habit of placing the objective pronouns after the verbs. This stumbling block must be removed; and to effect this, the students are taught to recite with a verb a perfect proposition. We proceed thus:

Let us suppose the verb to be conjugated is *to sell, vendre*: the student begins *Je vends, I sell*; he is asked what? he answers, *des marchandises, goods*. Who to? *A ces Messieurs, to these gentlemen*. He then recites the whole present tense, thus: *Je vends des marchandises à ces Messieurs, &c. &c. I sell goods to these gentlemen, &c.* Every student repeats alternately the same tense. After which they are asked, what are the pronouns to be used for goods and gentlemen? They answer, *the compound accusative EN, and the dative for persons LEUR*. Place

them before the verb and recite it through. One begins: *Je leur en vendais, tu leur en vendais, il leur en vendait, &c. &c.* That is: *I sold some of them to them, thou didst sell some of them to them, he sold some of them to them, &c.* and so on through all the tenses and moods, which being repeated alternately, the ear grows familiar with the new combination of sounds produced by the transposition of these pronouns. From this day all the verbs are to be recited by propositions; that is to say with all the pronouns it is possible for them to receive, either in a negative or interrogative sense.

On the same day, that is to say, the sixth lesson, we add another exercise, in order to improve the memory, and teach both the tongue and the ear. One or two pages of French phrases, grounded on the principles which they serve more fully to illustrate, are to be committed to memory, and recited without a book, by repeating thus: Suppose I say in English, *the study of languages improves and*

*enriches the mind.* One of the students repeats the same in French, and says: *l'étude des langues perfectionne l'esprit et l'enrichit.* The same is repeated separately, by every student, whose attention is engrossed by the French, which is rapidly passing from one to the other. In this manner we proceed through the task given. By this simple method, the tongue grows every day more flexible, and the ear acquires a knowledge of sounds.

The committing of phrases to memory, is thought by many teachers, to be unnecessary. This opinion proves either a want of judgment or great ignorance. Were these phrases even recited in the old way, or as it is practised by many, without repeating them, they would certainly be improving. But by my new method, it gives accuracy to the ear, boldness to the tongue, and qualifies the student for conversation.

The several exercises already mentioned,

are continued. When the students have received the twelfth lesson, they are able to read boldly; we then discard the mere pronouncing of short sentences, and take *L'Abeille Française*, out of which they read alternately, both prose and poetry, which they construe into English without a dictionary.

The students are led progressively forward through all their exercises, and when arrived at the twenty-fourth lesson, they are qualified to enter into a new and nobler exercise, by which the students are taught to compose into French, without either book or dictionary. Here, the mind is led to think in that language; the ear must acquire a perfect knowledge of the value of sounds, and the hand must cease to be a rebel in tracing rapidly upon paper, the characters that are the representatives of thought. I proceed to it in the following manner.

The class being ready to write, I read in



English, a whole phrase out of a French book that I hold in my hand. One of the students composes aloud into perfect French, what I have been saying in English; when the phrase is made perfect, I pronounce it distinctly, and every student writes down what I have repeated. We proceed through the book in the same manner, each student composing *alternately* by turns. While they are writing, I explain the rules, the tenses, and mood, genders and accidents, and even spell when necessary. All this is done with such rapidity, that they are kept busy writing as fast as they can write.

This new and improving exercise, is now considered as the ground work of the language; the others are all continued; they are auxiliaries to this, and teach separately all the parts which this last comprises and brings into practice. At the end of four months and a half from the day they began to study French, they write this language grammatically, and with as much ease as their vernacular tongue.

All the difficulties have now vanished, the language is grown easy, the students hear when spoken to, they make themselves understood when they speak, and they write it tolerably; and behold, the class dissolves. Many of them think they know already enough;—they carry with them all the thorns they have picked, and leave the rose standing on its stem, at the very moment they were to get it.

Such as wish for greater perfection, continue. They are introduced into new exercises; they are to read French from English without a dictionary, and then bring the same written from home. The verbs, which form the most essential part of a language, continue to be recited with all the pronouns; but we take a wider range, in order to have them all at our command. We proceed towards it in the following manner: The several tenses of a verb must be made up with a different verb. Thus: *Je le lui présente*, &c. (through the present tense), *Je les y mettais*, &c. (through the imper-

fect), *Je leur en parlai*, &c. *Je leur y en porterai*, &c. Thus in reciting the value of four verbs, we pass thirty-two of them in review; or we recite them in all their shapes, as: *Je punis, J'ai puni, Je suis puni, J'ai été puni*, through all the tenses and moods, and frequently with the relative personal and possessible pronouns, together with a noun, as: *Je vous prête mon livre, tu lui prêtes ton livre, il me prête son livre*, &c. &c.; and likewise, with the relative possessive pronoun, as: *Je vous prête le mien, tu lui prêtes le tien, il me prête le sien*, &c. Sometimes we join adverbs: *Je vous le prête de bon cœur*, &c. &c. In fine, there is not a single construction which is not rendered familiar to the student, who may in a short time speak, understand, and write it well, though not perfectly. In order to acquire it in perfection, the mind must be brought to reason deeply on the philosophy of the language. They have compared words; but these words need now to be examined in all their bearings; therefore, a philosophical analysis of the language ought to be made alto-

gether in French. I do not mean an analysis by rote; I mean a demonstrative analysis in writing; and this is the farthest a teacher can go with his pupils, whom he then leaves, conscious of having performed his duty—satisfied with his pupils' progress, and honoured by their attainments.

I have avoided entering into the minutiae which necessarily attend the teaching of a language. I have thought it sufficient to develop the principal features of my new system, which I shall reproduce here under the form of a recapitulation.

1st. The pronouncing of French sentences by repeating, in order to teach the tongue to articulate, and the ear to acquire a knowledge of sounds.

2d. The analytical method of construing the several parts of speech in writing, which teaches the students, how to render the most abstruse

and difficult parts of the language, and by which they learn both the construction and orthography of words.

3d. The reciting of French sentences without a book, and by repeating. This enriches the memory with a larger stock of words; teaches the phraseology of the language; forces the students to a mutual conversation with each other; gives boldness and confidence in uttering words; shortens the difficulties of reading, and improves both the tongue and the ear, the first, in uttering sounds; the second, in understanding their value.

4th. The philosophy of the *relative personal pronouns*, and their use rendered sensible and easy at first sight.

5th. The reciting of verbs by forming perfect propositions, with all the pronouns representing their members either as subjects, objects or terms. This exercise removes, at



once, the greatest difficulty the students meet in acquiring a knowledge of the French, because of the transposition of these pronouns, which are so many stumbling blocks in their way, and which can only be removed by reciting them together with the verbs, by which means their construction becomes easy and familiar.

6th. The composing in French and writing, under dictation; this great ground work of the language, that which combines in itself all the parts which the other exercises teach separately; that key to the thought, which obliges the student to make use of all he acquires every day; which forces him to think, to compare, and to compose; which teaches him to transpose the sounds which strike his ear, into a lasting body, and introduce him into the mysteries, exceptions and minutiae of the language, &c. &c.

7th. The reading both in prose and poetry,

and construing the same into English without a dictionary.

8th. The reading French from English without a dictionary, and a written translation of the same to be made at home, and brought for correction.

9th. The reciting of verbs in all their forms; each new tense to be made up with a different verb, expressing compound propositions, with pronouns, substantives and adverbs. This exercise gives activity to the mind in finding instantly the proper verb to be used.

10th. A written philosophical and demonstrative analysis in French, when the other exercises may be discarded, and replaced by conversations on all topics and subjects improving, agreeable, and instructive. This last exercise brings the student as near to perfection as possible; it closes and crowns the labour of both the teacher and his pupil.

On examination it will be found, that out of these ten prominent features, the *second*, *seventh* and *eighth only*, are partly used by other teachers, the remaining *seven* by me alone: they are my own invention.

I am confident that if all these exercises combining theory and practice, and going together hand in hand, as if to help each other mutually, are not conducive to the attainment of a language by the safest and shortest way to be found, no plan or system can ever be devised that shall do it.

But there is another class of students, whose object is simply to translate the French language into their vernacular tongue. With this object in view, they require the attendance of a teacher who generally begins by making them translate French into English. This method of teaching is contrary to both reason and philosophy; for, it is an absurdity to make a word, the meaning of which is unknown to the

student, the main principle of a comparison. Would it be thought rational in a philosopher, to make unknown stars belonging to unknown systems, the sole principle of comparison, by which we were to discover by analogy, what are the annual and diurnal rotation of the planets belonging to our system? Such an one, would be thought a fit subject for the attendance of medical gentlemen, in one of the cells of the Pennsylvania hospital.

However, to make up for such an ill digested scheme, the teacher stands by the student, and translates every word for him, or, otherwise makes him waste his time in the acquisition of what is unnecessary for the attainment of his object. Other teachers, more cunning and less honest, select such books, or passages of books, which every body knows by heart. Suppose it were, for example, *The Gospel according to Saint John*. Where is a parson, or a real christian, who knows not the whole of it by heart. Well, this is given to reverend gen-



clermen to translate into English. They need but transcribe what they already know, and then are gravely told, it is a translation they have made. There are quacks in every profession; and in languages as in physic, their great characteristics are ignorance and deception. These would have the world believe they have composed a specific for the cure of all diseases. Those that they have composed an unnamed essence, forty-eight drops of which, administered every other day, have the marvellous faculty of diffusing the knowledge of the French language into the whole frame of the body of man. But, the better to allure such, as seldom take the trouble of thinking for themselves, they both produce certificates of the miraculous effects of their wonderful discoveries; and among the names thus made public, are frequently found those who are made subservient to the work of deceit, by inducing sober men to betray their best judgment, to follow their example; and although such certificates identify the ignorance of the givers, with respect



to the thing certified, yet it eventually brings impostors into a kind of repute, and affords them opportunities of deceiving on a larger scale.

I presume that those persons who merely wish to understand the written language, are generally elderly men, acquainted with the dead languages, and capable of analysing their vernacular tongue. This is all that is requisite to make them stride over the difficulties of the language with gigantic steps. Students of this description ought, from the very first day, to translate English into French, thereby making the word known the principle of analogy with the corresponding word to be sought for in a dictionary.

The better to illustrate what I have just said, let us suppose a student has this first passage of Saint John to translate into French:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

With the assistance of his grammar and dictionary, he makes the following translation word for word, and writes it down, thus:

*Au commencement était la Parole, et la Parole était avec Dieu, et la Parole était Dieu.*

He may thus proceed alone, and translate out of any book he pleases; and I am confident, that if he be diligent, in less than twenty days, he will read a French book without using a dictionary. This is evident, for during twenty days he will be continually employed in analysing, composing and writing French. The impression made by that which his eyes have viewed, his mind has compared, and the characters which his hand has traced, will be deep and lasting; and those words which he has thus composed, will always be present in his memory.

If, on the contrary, a student is directed to translate French into English, how shall he analyse a sentence made up of words, the meaning of which is unknown to him? Which of those words is the subject, object or term, verb or attribute, modification or circumstance? This he knows not, he cannot know it; therefore, he is perplexed and can do nothing, except his teacher be by him, and do for him, what he ought to do himself alone. A good etymologist knows that the French and English languages have a common origin; but the French pilfered from both the Greek and Latin, whose spoils the English received at the hand of the French, under a fantastical dress. National pride, fancy, and the fickleness of every succeeding generation, have made such changes in the garb of the same individuals, that although they retain the primitive stock, they have now assumed a different appearance. These diversified draperies which conceal the same object, will perplex even the best scholar. Hence, if he succeed in making a translation

from the French into English, he does it more by conjecture than by a knowledge of the real meaning of the French word. Besides, after overcoming many difficulties, what has he produced? An English transcription. Can he acquire a thorough knowledge of the combination of the letters that compose a French word by writing English? It is true, his eyes have had a sight of the French word; but they have in reality been employed in viewing the combination of the English letters, which his hand has traced. Thus, the eyes, the mind and the hand, which are the principal agents in this work, are rendered nugatory. It would, indeed, be more profitable for him, to take a French book already translated into English, and then spend his time in seeking for, and viewing every corresponding word. In this last case, both his eyes and mind would at least be equally intent on both languages; whereas by translating French into English, the first of these receives but a mere glance; and the second engrosses all his faculties. Would not a



man be thought out of his senses, were he to affirm, that by merely casting a glance at a building as he passes along, he knew as much about the quantity and quality of the materials, which have been employed in its perfect structure, as he who has raised and finished it?

I then say, that he who is a scholar, will be capable of reading a French book in less than twenty days, if he do at once translate French into English; and were it not for some idiomatical phrases and proverbial expressions, he might do this alone, without the assistance of a teacher.

Will it be objected that this is a theory untried by experience? I answer, that numerous experiments have proved its superiority over the old systems. I can produce many instances, and I myself am one. I never employed any body to teach me the English language. On my first coming to the United States, I wished to acquire a knowledge of the English lan-



guage, that I might in due time, enjoy the advantage of citizen in a free country. I called on a teacher; he was a Jew; and although he had a great many pupils, he knew nothing about grammar; such a teacher did not answer my purpose; I resolved to make an experiment. A friend of mine wrote to Philadelphia, (I was in Charleston, S. C.) to get a copy of Cobbett's Grammar for me. In the mean while, with the assistance of a dictionary and a grammar for Englishmen to learn French, I began to translate French into English. I could not have translated English into French; for it was impossible for me to tell what such and such words were or meant; but by following my own plan, in less than ten days, I understood the newspapers; and within thirty days I read English books without using a dictionary. So, that when the grammar expected from Philadelphia arrived, I had no use for it. Thus, I acquired a knowledge of the written language in a short time; but, I was like a deaf man when spoken to, nor could I speak but some

broken sentences. To hear and speak a foreign language well, present many difficulties, which are to be overcome only by application and practice. I improved every opportunity. At the court-house, I received lessons on the oral language, by listening to the arguments of the advocates. Places of worship were as many places of instruction for me; and having a psalm book in my hand, the venerable clergyman taught me to pronounce English. Nevertheless, two years passed away in constant practice, before I could speak readily on all subjects, or understand whatever was said within my hearing.

What I have just said of myself, and the numerous experiments I have made by teaching others, fully prove, that although a person who has a perfect knowledge of his vernacular tongue can, in the manner I have stated, become acquainted with the written language in a short time; yet it is impossible to acquire a thorough knowledge of its three component

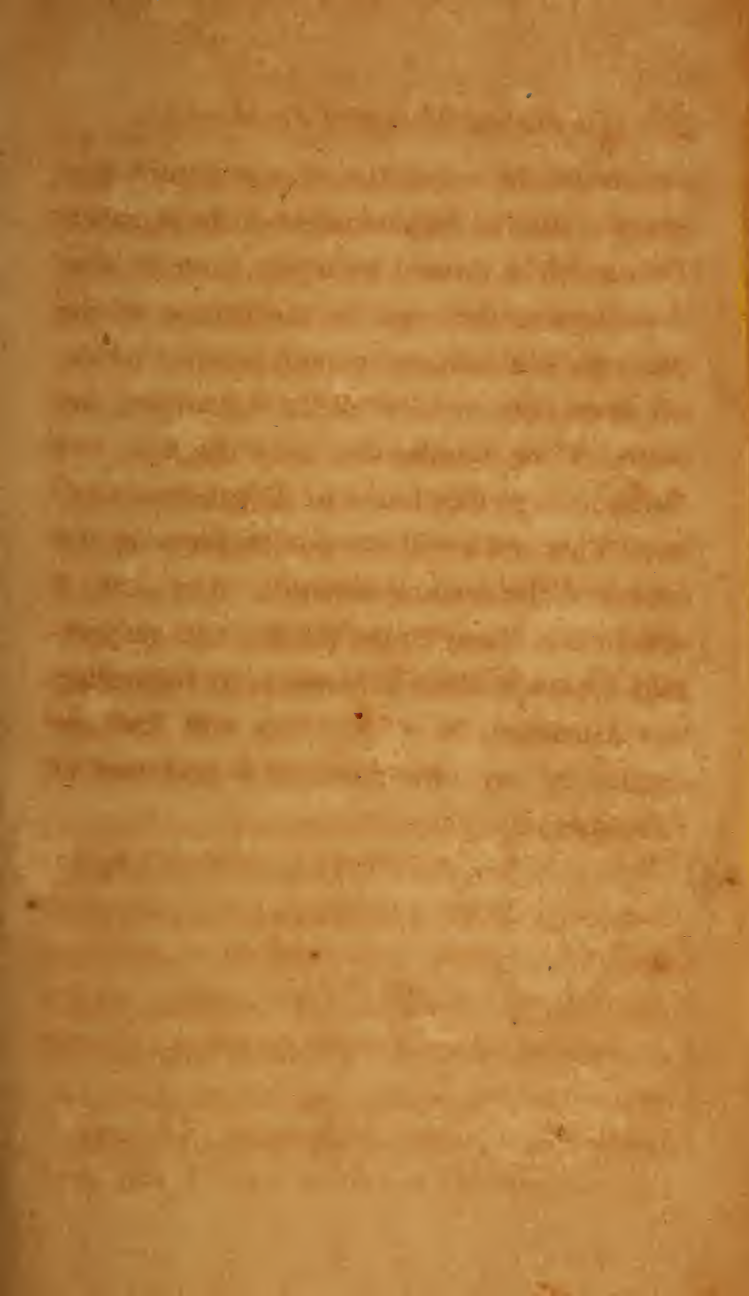
parts within so short a period. Besides, a person learning French in this country, meets with no such opportunities as I had. Is the French language spoken in the family he lives with? Is there a court-house, where he may go and listen to the arguments of advocates, or hear the charges delivered by the judge in the French language? Can he repair to a place of worship, and there hear a discourse delivered in French from the pulpit? No. What an impostor must he be, who promises to make his pupils perfect in the knowledge of the French language in a few lessons, by making them translate French into English?

It is evident that a person who wishes to acquire the three component parts of the French language, is to learn them from his teacher; and the system herein presented for this purpose, is the one by which it can be effected.

Ere I take leave of the reader, I will inform him, that I have written a Grammar, which

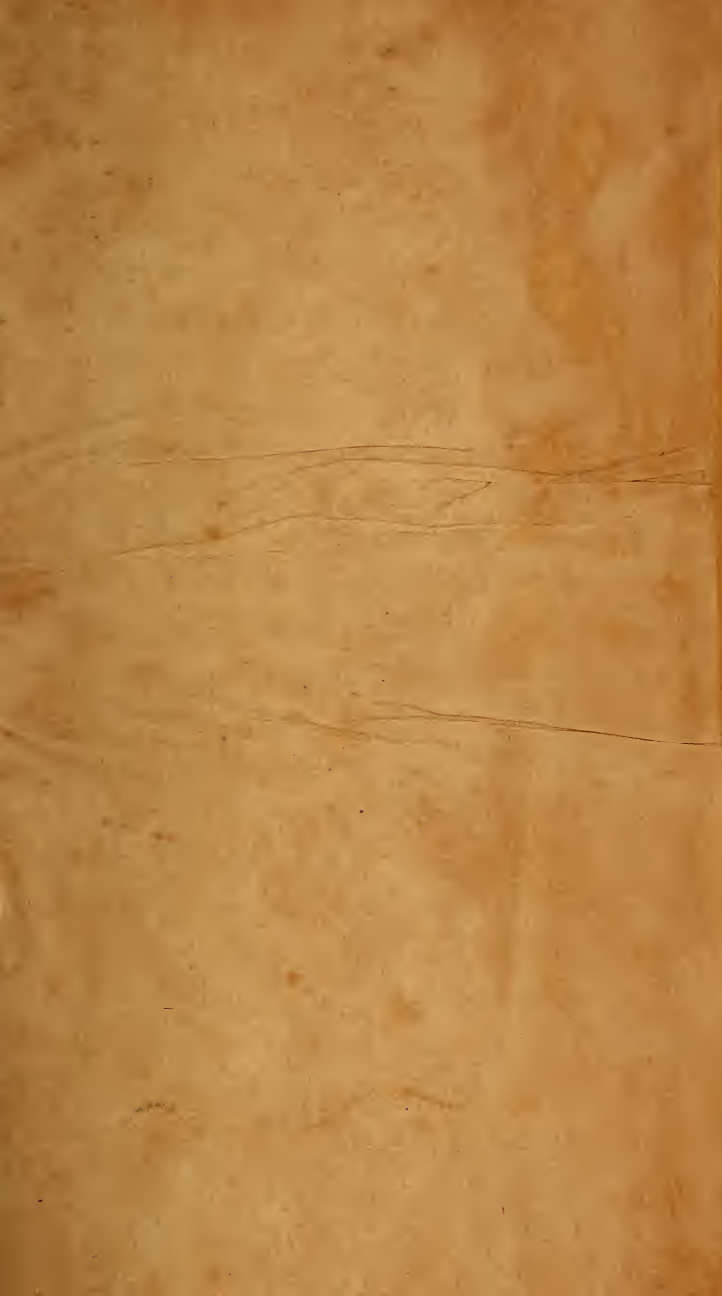
will render the acquisition of the French language as easy as the attainment of the alphabet. This work is formed on a plan entirely new. It displays to the eyes the mechanism of the language in a series of comprehensive tables, which at once resolve all the difficulties, and destroy those numberless, unintelligible, and contradictory rules found in all grammars extant. This work will be put to press in the course of the ensuing summer. And now, I submit this Essay to the public, and respectfully appeal to their generosity, by requesting that patronage, to which they will find me entitled by my own merit as a professor of Languages.

THE END.





















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